

Executive Summary

Communities Near Hill AFB

A majority of residents (57%) say their community is better or about the same as it was five years ago. One-fifth (22%) say their community is worse now compared to five years ago, or they don't know (21%). Residents living in the Western area are more likely to say their community is better compared to five years ago than are residents in the Layton or Northern areas. Respondents say the greatest environmental concerns facing their community today are pollution (13%), growth (12%), traffic (9%), and water issues (8%). Pollution and growth are more important environmental concerns for Layton residents than they are for people living in the Northern or Western areas. Traffic is a marginally more pressing concern for residents in the Northern area. Water issues are more important to those living in the Northern and Western areas.

Respondents say the greatest health concerns facing their community today are pollution (13%), water pollution (5%), and cancers (4%). Water pollution is a more pressing health concern for people living in the Northern and Western areas. Northern area residents mention pollution from Hill AFB as an environmental concern more often than do those who live in other areas. One-fourth of respondents (27%) say there are environmental health risks in their area. Long-term residents, older people, and South Weber residents are most concerned about environmental health risks. The most widely mentioned environmental health risks include the burn plant (17%), Hill AFB (17%), pollution (16%), and water issues (8%). Hill AFB is considered more of an environmental health risk in the Northern area than in other areas.

Residents feel mostly positive or neutral about their community sharing a border with Hill AFB. Less than one-half (44%) say it is a positive thing. Two in five (40%) say sharing a border with Hill AFB makes no difference to them. Among those who say sharing a border with Hill AFB is a positive thing, they cite jobs as the top reason (47%), followed by bringing in business/economic factors (15%). People living in the Northern area are less inclined to say that sharing a border with Hill AFB is a positive thing. Among respondents who say sharing a border with Hill AFB is a negative thing, many cite noise (49%) or pollution/groundwater (17%) as the reason why they do not like living near Hill AFB.

Shallow Groundwater Contamination

One-fifth of respondents (19%) are aware of specific areas off base that have been found to have contaminated shallow groundwater because of Hill AFB. Males, long term residents, older people, home owners, people with family members employed at Hill AFB, retired civilians, and South Weber residents are most aware of the contamination. A small percentage (5%) say they own or rent property that is affected by the contamination; many of them live in the Northern area. Placing the issue of shallow groundwater contamination on a 1-7 scale, respondents rate the issue as a mild concern. Residents in the Northern area place the issue of shallow groundwater contamination higher on their list of concerns (4.20) than do other respondents.

Awareness of the Cleanup Process

Among those who are aware of the groundwater contamination, a high percentage (84%) are aware of the cleanup process. People aware of the cleanup process say they have heard that it is taking place (27%), that testing and monitoring is occurring on a continual basis (12%), and that Hill AFB is required to do it (9%). Among those who are unaware of any specific areas with shallow groundwater contamination (three-fourths of all respondents, or 78%), one-tenth (11%) are aware of any Hill AFB environmental cleanup initiatives. People have heard about the cleanup by I-15 in Sunset (13%), the monitoring wells drilled around Hill AFB (9%), or they read about the cleanup program in the newspaper (9%). Many residents say they would call Hill AFB (27%) or their city (24%) if they had a question or concern about the environment or cleanup at Hill AFB.

Seeking Information about Hill AFB and the Environment

Eight percent of respondents (8%) say they have wanted or needed information about environmental issues that involved Hill AFB. Among those who would like more information, one-third (35%) are interested in learning about contaminated groundwater and drinking water. Other respondents would like to know the location of contaminated soil (7%). One-tenth of respondents (13%) say they have received information about environmental cleanup from Hill AFB. Three-fourths of those who received information (78%) say the information was easy to understand. Significantly fewer (10%) say the information was too technical.

Sources of Information

The newspaper (83%) is the most widely mentioned source of information about Hill AFB's environmental cleanup efforts. Respondents have also relied significantly on word of mouth (67%), newsletters (58%), direct contact with Hill AFB (33%), public meetings (23%), and the Internet (22%) for information. Public meetings and newsletters are used significantly more often by Northern area residents. Word of mouth is a less important source for Layton residents. Among those who say they have received information about environmental cleanup from Hill AFB, two-thirds (67%) say they have received enough information. One-fourth (27%) say they need a little or a lot more information.

In terms of effective sources, newspapers and newsletters are rated as the most effective sources of information (48% very effective for both). Word of mouth (34% very effective) and the Internet (32% very effective) are also mentioned as very effective sources. A moderately effective source of information is contacting Hill AFB directly (28% very effective). Slightly less effective sources are meetings open to the public (14% very effective), city council meetings (14% very effective), the library (11% very effective), and the Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) (11% very effective).

Among the percentage who recall receiving EnviroNews (8%), a majority of respondents (69%) say they read all or some of it. There are many residents who have not received the newsletter, but would like to receive it. Although many people have access to the Internet at home (64%), a majority of respondents would prefer to get their information about Hill AFB's cleanup efforts by hard copy through the mail, rather than online.

Thirteen percent of respondents (13%) say they are aware of the RAB. Northern area residents are more aware of the RAB; they are also more likely to attend a public input meeting. People are somewhat interested in learning more about the RAB and taking a tour of cleanup sites.